

FISK ARCHIVES

M33-13
GENERAL
BACKGROUND

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November 18, 1931.

Dear Dr. Clark: The officers and trustees of the Fund have been reviewing the syphilis control demonstrations in which the Fund has cooperated with the Public Health Service and health officers of several southern states. The intense importance of the problem of syphilis has unquestionably been revealed in a dramatic way by these studies. It appears to be a factor of the first magnitude affecting not only public health, but the vitality of a large proportion of the population and their efficiency as workers.

The work has made clear that in the rural areas covered, it has been practicable to find cases, and a procedure seems to have been evolved which is effective in getting and keeping a substantial proportion of them under treatment.

What is the next step?

It seems to us that the work has not yet gone far enough to outline a program of large-scale application, even if funds were available. An intermediary stage is required between the six initial experiments and a final stage of large-scale application. During this intermediary stage, administrative methods must be standardized, so as to meet the interests of the general public health work of the community, and in particular, costs must be determined and the method whereby the relatively expensive and long-continued treatment of syphilis can be paid for with proper consideration both of public means and of the interests of the medical profession. It is apparent in many of these rural areas that only a very small proportion of the population can afford to pay on the usual private-rate basis for the complete treatment of an expensive disease as syphilis.

In addition recently, through the influence of the Julius Rosenwald Fund has obtained our belief in the importance of the problem, of our application of what has already been

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Re: Public Health Task

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11/17/31

accomplished by the Public Health Service and the health officers of the states. Our trustees are prepared to support as the next step the plan already discussed with you and with the Surgeon-General, that a review be made of the work thus far accomplished and a program for a period of two or three years be prepared, which may be submitted to the Board sometime next spring. The resources of the Julius Rosenwald Fund will not permit its participation in contributions to national wide-wide programs of large-scale application in syphilis control, but we are prepared to consider participation for a brief period in the next or intercessionary stage referred to above. While the plan for this is in preparation, we will consider making grants of interim character to one or more of the six counties for the purpose of preventing disruption of personnel or loss of momentum.

With appreciation of the pleasure and privilege of working with the Public Health Service and numerous state officials in this important project, I am

Sincerely yours,

John C. Clark

Dr. Paulino Clark
U. S. Public Health Service
Treasury Department
Washington, D. C.